

VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes - September 20, 2007
Approved October 18, 2007

Members Present: Austin Bliss, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon, Sara Oaklander, Al Rubin, Kirk Hazlett

Also in attendance: Delores Keefe

Members absent: Paul Santos, Joseph Crugnale, Anne Rittenburg, Jay Szklut, Vinnie DeNovellis

1. Welcome to New Member Alfred Rubin

We welcomed Alfred Rubin as our newest committee member. Al is a retired professor from the Fletcher School. Committee members introduced themselves and provided brief personal backgrounds for Al.

2. Approval of July 18, 2007 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting were read and approved unanimously.

3. Recap of "Meet Belmont"

Jennifer devoted some time to educating Al on the history of Meet Belmont & the Neighbors Network.

The Meet Belmont event was organized and planned by Jennifer, Sara & Laurie Grahm. In attendance at the day of the event were Meg, Vinnie, Kirk, Paul Solomon, Sara, Jennifer, and Laurie.

Comments on the event:

- Town Clerk's table was made bigger, chairs added. This worked well.
- Crowd felt smaller than usual, but still an extraordinary gathering place.
- Clearly not just an event for newcomers. Even people who have lived in town for years benefited.
- All town departments were well represented.
- People commented that they appreciated that it wasn't business oriented.
- During sign-in, some people were brand new (literally only a few days old) who were really excited.
- Nice that Paul Solomon was able to meet people directly, hand out his card, and make a personal connection.
- Religious organizations were all at one big long table.
- It was suggested we should have an evaluation form for exhibitors. Laurie will send an evaluation via email to them and the attendees who contributed their email address.
- About 100 families came, which is consistent with previous years. But fewer exhibitors, because of lack of advance notice (no save-the-date was sent), and lack of a consistent date year to year. Approximately 75 exhibitors rather than the typical 95.
- We should try to explore ways for businesses to be there without being present.
- It is nice to greet people when they entered.
- Exhibitors at this point know what to expect.
- Morris dancers did occasional entertainment in a prominent location and it added a nice feel.
- Exhibitors were asked to not use sound or electrical devices, as well as to keep their displays modestly sized. This helped simplify and put the emphasis on face-to-face communications and keep the room more open.

Things we can do better:

- more welcoming use of outside entry space & signage to get people into the entrance and down hallway.
- brownies, cub scouts, greeters in hallway/doorway
- more use of color coded maps and easels for signage
- identifying clothing for staff (e.g. buttons, hats, or "Miss America" sashes)
- lock in the date as soon as possible
- get started earlier & line up more help

Minutes...continued

- do more outreach to existing residents, consider including previous year's distribution lists in the upcoming blast. Also consider inviting the people who signed up last year
- figure out a way to involve businesses without inviting them.
- send out an email to the addresses collected, thanking them for attending event & offering them the opportunity to join the Belmont listserv or possibly the Belmont yahoo group and suggest they indicate their involvement/interest in working on the committee, etc.
- we need a designated champion (or two) from the VIC, who are charged with the nurturing and development of the spin-off group.

Jennifer shared that Terri Bono(?) & Laura Caputo (?) appear to have started a new newcomer's organization. They actually had a table at Meet Belmont. We decided some members of VIC should meet up for coffee with them. They also have a gathering at Habitat scheduled soon, which Austin and Jennifer will try to attend.

We all agreed that we need people to investigate the revitalization of a Neighborhood Network. The booklet and Meet Belmont both need attention.

Sara & Jennifer will ask Laura to develop email list for previous years. Sara will craft the text soliciting people to get involved.

Jennifer is the primary liaison for Sustainable Belmont, and feels like she can't be the primary point person for the Neighbor's Network. We discussed alternate people, but did not come to any conclusions.

4. Discussion of School Committee's Request to Cut Back on VIC Involvement

Paul recapped the original intended composition of the committee & the request of the school committee to reduce their involvement. Jennifer reminded us that at a point in the past, we had Jen Fallon on VIC, who was actually a retired member of the school committee. Jennifer thought this might be a good solution (e.g. an ex-school committee representative). Paul Solomon suggested Kathy Miller or the past president of the PTO. Kirk will approach the School Committee Chairman & keep us apprised.

5. Recap from Sustainable Belmont

Event: Sunday, October 28 from 7-9 in Belmont High School, Impacts of Global Warming talk, Union of Concerned Scientists.

6. Other

Kirk will update the list of members & redistribute.

New member orientations: Wed, Oct 10 with Jennifer & Paul. Kirk will also check with Joseph once he confirms with Al, who will not know until October 1.

Paul suggested that for next months' agenda we discuss the structure for this committee and how to move forward

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 18, 2007 from 7-9pm

Then November 15 and December 20.

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm

Respectfully submitted,
Austin C. Bliss
Secretary Pro Tempore